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NOTES AND NEWS

The New York State Modern Language Association held its tenth annual meeting, originally planned for last November, on March 29, at Barnard College, New York City. An excellent program had been prepared by Dr. J. B. E. Jonas of the DeWitt Clinton High School, President of the Association, and papers and discussions held the interested attention of the many teachers in attendance.

"Classroom French and the War" was the subject of Mr. William Milwitzky of the Barringer High School, Newark, N. J., who had found at Camp Merritt that the time allowed for the study of French was, in general, too short to develop in the soldiers any readiness of foreign speech. He had found it more advantageous to lecture in English on the customs of the French and to recommend that the boys use English freely, supplemented by gestures, until they could acquire a small working vocabulary in France.

In a carefully prepared paper on "The Future of German Instruction in America," Professor Calvin Thomas of Columbia University pointed out the folly of the extreme attacks on the German language, and at the same time urged a thorough-going Americanism. The value of the study of German will again be appreciated. The speaker has, however, for twenty-five years held the opinion that foreign languages were out of place in grades below the high school. In the American educational system the emphasis must be on the language and traditions of our own country. This principle must be made to apply to the numerous localities that have maintained foreign schools and an alien press instilling European ideals, and which, though in the country, are not a part of it.

Professor Robert H. Fife, Jr., of Wesleyan University, spoke on the future of German in the high schools. Arguments, during the past two years, against the retention of the language have been based upon emotion; arguments for, upon reason. The need of German for scientific use will no doubt be increased after the war, with new discoveries and inventions. Commercially, also, English, French and German will be important. The use of a modern foreign language must be begun while the pupil is in the plastic stage; elementary German is a high school subject, and should

not be eliminated; it is to be recommended as a regular subject for the junior high school.

"Handicaps in the Teaching of Spanish," pointed out by Professor Edith Fahnestock of Vassar College, include lack of properly prepared teachers, owing to the increased demand; lack of texts; and lack of *realia*. The chief agency in equipping teachers is the summer school, which is also the only available substitute for residence abroad. As for texts, some are duplicated by different publishers and others are missing, while some of those published have been hastily prepared. There is need for more *realia*; maps, post-cards, and other illustrative material; a Spanish weekly or daily is valuable.

Professor Anna Woods Ballard of Teachers College, Columbia University, emphasized the importance of "The Use of Phonetic Symbols in French Pronunciation," urging that French sounds and words correctly pronounced should be taught first, then the symbols for the sounds; this can be done in eight lessons. Then a phonetic text should be used, with constant practice in reading. The enthusiasm of the teacher is a large factor in starting the pupil on the road to success in the difficult matter of French pronunciation.

Dr. Charles F. Wheelock, State Commissioner for Secondary Education, in discussing the topics on the morning program, urged that we keep in mind the purpose of language instruction. Is it for business use, or for literature? This question is most naturally brought up in connection with the phenomenal growth of Spanish, the commercial value of which is generally overestimated. Many educators claim there is waste of time in instruction in the foreign languages and in English. How to reduce, overcome, and eliminate the waste is an urgent problem.

The afternoon session started with a consideration of "The Outlook for Modern Language Instruction after the War" by Professor David Snedden of Teachers College, Columbia University. As a result of this war, more languages will probably be included in the curriculum; there may be an increased call for Italian, Portuguese, and Russian, and even for Japanese and Chinese. There is a need for much research work, to determine the real purpose and aims of the study, and the best means to attain the ends. How much language? At what age? More

stress should be placed on achievement in *one* foreign language; rarely should a pupil be permitted to study more than one in the high school; nor should he be left to choose at random which language that should be. Training in one language should develop power to use the language; pupils who will have no use for the language, or who have no language ability, should not be offered the subject. The speaker discussed the commercial, political, social, and cultural values of foreign language study.

In a paper on "American Summer Schools as a Substitute for Study in Europe" Professor Lilian L. Stroebe of Vassar College spoke of the increased importance of these schools during the last four years, since study abroad has been out of the question. The speaker recommended that only the foreign language be used during the course, English to be excluded; that only one foreign language be studied; and that several courses be pursued in that language. The ideal summer school will provide lectures and social gatherings, and teachers enough to insure individual help.

Professor Ernest H. Wilkins of the University of Chicago, in a paper on "The Place of Italian in American Schools and Colleges" reported the disproportionate number of students in three Romance languages in this country: French, 300,000; Spanish, 250,000; Italian, 4,000. For vocational and other aims, the balance is too great in favor of Spanish as against Italian. For both cultural and utilitarian reasons, more Italian should be encouraged; the literature is of the richest, and mutual understanding between Italy and America should be fostered. Professor Wilkins quoted from several heads of Romance departments in support of his position.

Election of officers, with other business usually transacted at annual meetings, was deferred until next November.

ARTHUR G. HOST, *Secretary*.

NOTICE TO TEACHERS DESIRING TO USE MEASUREMENTS

Teachers desiring to use Silent Reading Tests A and B, for first or second year French, German or Spanish, or any Grammar and Comprehension Test for first year French or German can be supplied with copies by addressing the undersigned.

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